



LESSON 1 // OUT OF THE ORDINARY

God is always ready and willing to give people a fresh start. Over and over we read biblical stories of men and women who found something new in their lives through their relationship with the Lord.

The only way to experience real renewal in your life, your marriage, your family or your work is through a fresh encounter with Jesus. Every time you give Him a new place in you or a new part of you, you can count on rich renewal.

In this series, we're looking at people who met Christ in powerful ways and the changes they experienced through Him. From these stories, we'll learn lessons for our lives and believe that Jesus will change us as we experience Him. We begin with an account of some men who were called "out of the ordinary" by Jesus:

Mark 1:14-20 (NIV) *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news. ¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.*

From the response of these men, we see how we can experience the extraordinary in Christ.

1. Say "yes" to the call.

Christ's call to these four that day would forever change their lives. Their encounter with the Lord would bring them into a whole new dimension of life—a life they had never dreamed of.

Although we may think of these men as great and worthy of this call, they were actually very ordinary. There was nothing noteworthy or particularly unique about them. They were common people occupied with common, everyday tasks. Christ came and looked for people who were ordinary. He came to call ordinary people to an extraordinary, supernatural life!

What these ordinary men had was an openness to Jesus. When He called, they immediately followed and held nothing back from Him. Peter, Andrew and John had actually met Jesus earlier (see John 1:35-41), but now was the time that they said "yes" to His call to follow Him. In the same way, Jesus prepares us and then calls us to say "yes" to Him and the new opportunities He wants to bring to our lives.

2. Believe the promise.

Jesus came to these men proclaiming an important message: “The time has come. ... The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news” (Mark 1:15). The Greek word *kairos* (“time”) speaks of an opportunity—a special opportunity available because “the kingdom of God has come near” in the person and ministry of the Son of God.

Jesus has all authority and power (Matthew 28:18) to call us and bring us into a new life. But we must “repent and believe the good news”—the promise that God’s kingdom and salvation have come to us in Christ. Jesus also gave the fishermen He called another promise: “Come follow me and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:15, NKJV).

God’s good news message promises significant transformation. Jesus knew what these men were, but He also knew what they could become! In the same way, Jesus knows what you are now and what you can become—if you let Him work in you as He desires. Simply present your ordinary self to Jesus, with an open heart, mind and will, and He promises to change the “occupation” of your life.

3. Embrace the process.

If these men were going to enter a whole new occupation, realizing the promise of Christ to “make” them “fishers of men,” they needed to commit to and cooperate with a process. This passage gives us four key words about the commitment and cooperation required for this promise to be realized: repent, believe, come and follow.

There are many people who remain ordinary and never find God’s best for their lives because they never make these four commitments. In contrast, the four men that Jesus called responded by embracing these commitments. Four phrases express their response and encourage us to follow their example. To move from the ordinary to the extraordinary Jesus desires for us, we must respond to Him with:

- *immediate obedience*
- *separation from empty entanglements*
- *faith for a new future*
- *faithfulness to a new way of life*

This is the process that releases God’s possibilities for our lives—the fulfillment of His promises to us. Like these first disciples, we can experience a whole new life in Christ as we follow Him!

Discussion questions

1. What does it mean to “repent and believe the good news”? How does this open your life to new opportunities from God?
2. Why is “immediate obedience” so important in moving from an ordinary to extraordinary life in Christ?
3. In what ways does “faithfulness to a new way of life” in Jesus help you rise above the ordinary?